NOTES

Anon. 1821. *Letters written during the late voyage of discovery in the Western Arctic Sea by an officer of the expedition*. Sir Richard Phillips & Co., London
Bissoondoyal, B. 1968. *The truth about Mauritius.* Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay.
Carié, P. 1904. *Ornis* **12**: 121-128.
Cheke, AS. 1987. In: Diamond, AW. (ed.) *Studies of Mascarene Island birds.* Cambridge Univ. Press, Cambridge.
Darnton, I. 1975. *Jungle journeys in Ceylon*. Galaxy Books, Lavenham, Suffolk
Dewar, D. 1925. *Indian bird life.* Bodley Head, London
Feare, CJ. & Mungroo, Y. 1990. *Biol. Conserv.* **51**: 63-70.
Grimmett, R, Inskipp, C & Inskipp, T 1999. *A guide to the birds of India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives.*A& C Black, London.
Henry, GM. 1971. *A guide to the birds of Ceylon*. 2nd ed. Oxford Univ. Press, London.
La Fay, H. 1972. *The Vikings*. National Geographic Society, Washington.
Legge, V. 1880. *A history of the birds of Ceylon*. Tisara Prakasakayo, Dehiwala, Sri Lanka [1983 reprint] 4 vols.
Lever, C. 2005. *Naturalised birds of the world*. 2nd ed, revised & expanded. A&C Black (Croom Helm), London
Long, JL. 1981. *Introduced birds of the world.* AH&AW Reed, Sydney & David & Charles, Newton Abbot, UK.
Madge, S. & Burn H. 2001. *Crows & jays.* Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton.
Meinertzhagen, R. 1912. *Ibis* (9) **6**: 82-108.
Meininger, PL., Mullié, WC. & Bruun, B. 1984. *Gerfaut* **70**: 245-250.
Oates, EW. 1889. *The fauna of British India including Ceylon and Burma*. Birds. Vol.1. Taylor & Francis, London.
Rountree, FRG. *et al.* 1952. *Bull. Mauritius Inst.* **3**: 155-217.
Ryall, C. 1994. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club* **114**: 90-100.
1995. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club* **115**: 185-187.
2002. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club* **122**: 231-240.
Salamolard, M. 2004. *Chakouat* **11**: 5.
Skerrett, A., Bullock, I. & Disley, T. 2001. *Birds of Seychelles*. A&C Black, London.
Whistler, H. 1949. *Popular handbook of Indian birds.* 4th.ed. [rev. by N.B.Kinnear] Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh [reprinted 1963]

Additional 18th century records of endemic Seychelles fauna

Anthony Cheke
139 Hurst Street, Oxford OX4 1HE, UK
anthony.cheke@innerbookshop.com

While going through 18th century manuscripts from Philibert Commerson in Paris to extract data for Mascarene animals, I also came across material from Seychelles - representing species not formally described for many decades after Commerson

received them and had them drawn. The drawings, by Commerson's artist Paul Jossigny, are held in the archives of the Bibliothèque de Muséum in Paris (Laissus 1974), as part of MS 282 (2). This is a series of portfolios with drawings of specimens from Bougainville's expedition around the world, and from Madagascar and Indian Ocean islands done after Commerson left the expedition. He was then based in Mauritius from 1768 until his death in March 1773 (Oliver 1909, Monnier *et al.* 1994).

Jossigny was a meticulous artist, and his drawings of vertebrates and large invertebrates are easily identifiable even (as often) when they are not annotated by Commerson. Amongst the drawings are accurate renderings of the giant tenebrionid beetle *Polsopipus herculaneus*, the Seychelles chameleon *Calumna tigris,* and two depictions of Seychelles endemic snakes (*Boaedon geometricus* or *Lycognathophis seychellensis*) which I was not able to identify on the spot. Apart from being labelled as from the Seychelles, the reptile drawings are not annotated, and the beetle does not even have the locality noted. In addition to these endemic animals, there are two drawings of a white-tailed tropic-bird *Phaethon lepturus* labelled as from Seychelles, and a brown noddy *Anous stolidus* that the context suggests was also from the islands. Published explorers' accounts of the period (Gerlach 1995) reported the seabirds, and a snake on Praslin, but not the chameleon or the beetle. As I was on a different quest, and the museum's charge for reproducing these archives is substantial, I did not request copies - so this note is primarily to draw attention to the presence of Seychelles material in the Commerson archive. There may be further items (particularly invertebrates) that I missed, and there are also written descriptions by Commerson, mostly in Latin, which might contain items from Seychelles, though I did not notice any when looking for Mascarene material.

Commerson did not visit Seychelles himself (Ly-Tio-Fane 1978), so the specimens must have been collected for him by one of the several expeditions from Mauritius that visited the Seychelles during 1768-1771 (Lionnet 1972). The drawings are unlikely to be later than 1771 as Jossigny remained in Réunion after Commerson's visit there that year, returning to his job as the island's second engineer (Ly-Tio-Fane 1978). Commerson also acquired plant specimens from the Seychelles (62 species, Laissus 1974), including the first material of the Coco-de-mer *Lodoicea maldivica*, controversially written up by his other artist Pierre Sonnerat (1776), who disingenuously implied having visited the Seychelles himself (he only passed nearby offshore). The Coco-de-mer material was collected by botanically-minded astronomer 'Abbé' Alexis Rochon in 1769 (Lionnet 1972, Ly-Tio-Fane 1978, Monnier *et al.* 1993), who, as a scientist, and friend of Commerson and Pierre Poivre (civil governor of Mauritius), may also have brought back the other specimens. Commerson's material remained unpublished in the Paris archives, and the animals mentioned above were not formally described until much later when new material became available. The beetle was eventually described in 1848 (Gerlach *et al.* 1997), the snakes in 1837 (Nussbaum 1984) and the chamaeleon in 1820 (Bourgat & Domergue 1971).

Acknowledgements:

I am most grateful to Pascale Huertel for permission to examine the Commerson

manuscripts in the Bibliothèque du Muséum, Paris, in October 2006.

References:

Bourgat, R.M. & Domergue, C.A. 1971. *Ann. Univ. Madagascar, Sci.* **8**: 235-244.
Gerlach, J. 1995. *Phelsuma* **3**: 67-71.
Gerlach, J., Daszak, P. & Jones, CG. 1997. *Phelsuma* **5**: 43-48.
Laissus, Y. 1974. *Cah. Centre Univ. Réunion, No. Spécial Colloque Commerson*: 76-101 [reprinted 1978 in *Rev. Hist. Sci., Paris* **31**: 131-162]
Lionnet, [J.F.] G. 1972. *The Seychelles*.: David & Charles, Newton Abbot, UK.
Ly-Tio-Fae, M. 1978 ('1976'). *Pierre Sonnerat 1748-1814. An account of his life and work*. Mauritius: (author).
Monnier, J., Lavondes, A., Jolinon, J-C. & Elouard, P. 1993. *Philibert Commerson, le découvreur du bougainvillier.* Association Saint-Guignefort, Châtillon-sur-Chalaronne
Nussbaum, R.A. 1984. Snakes of the Seychelles. In: Stoddart, D.R. (ed.) 1984. *Biogeography and ecology of the Seychelles Islands*. W. Junk, The Hague.
Oliver, S.P. 1909. *The life of Philibert Commerson, D.M., Naturaliste du Roi. An old-world story of French travel and science in the days of Linnaeus.* [ed. by G.F. Scott Elliott] John Murray, London
Sonnerat, P. 1776. *Voyage à la Nouvelle Guinée.* Ruault, Paris. 2 vols.

The risk to other Indian Ocean islands of invasive species on Diego Garcia

Anthony Cheke
139 Hurst St, Oxford OX4 1HE, UK
anthony.cheke@innerbookshop.com

In addition to the political issues around the presence of the American base on Diego Garcia, there are biological implications which extend beyond that island to the rest of the Chagos and other islands of the Indian Ocean, perhaps most especially the Seychelles. Since their occupation of Diego Garcia, the Americans have, by accident or design, introduced a number of highly invasive animals, with the risk of doing great harm if they spread to other islands. Flights come in to Diego Garcia regularly from Guam and the main place used by US service personal for rest & recreation is Singapore. Guam is home to several ecologically disastrous species, and Singapore is a major centre of the pet trade, the main way in which inappropriate species are spread around the world.

One of the world's worst tropical pest species is already abundant on Diego Garcia - the notorious Cane Toad *Bufo marinus* that is causing such problems for native wildlife and even domestic pets in Australia (Lever 2001, 2003). Apparently released